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AUTHOR Banks, J. A. G.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

By 1992, the Single or Common Market in Europe will provide freedom of movement of goods, persons, services, and capital. From the viewpoint of educational and vocational guidance services, the most important effect of the Single Market is its likely impact on educational and occupational mobility. The two major obstacles toward freedom of movement within the European community that remain are nonrecognition of qualifications from one member state to another and inadequate mastery of foreign languages. Two major education and training programs, COMETT and ERASMUS, have been established by the European Community. COMETT provided funds for the development of university-industry partnerships nationally and transnationally, and for a range of exchanges, joint projects, and joint development work designed to promote gradual Europeanization of university-level technical training. The aim of ERASMUS is to ensure that all students in higher education are able to study for part of their course in another member state. A new program, LINGUA, has been adopted to improve the qualifications and competence of modern language teachers, develop interuniversity cooperation in modern language teaching, and support the development of modern language learning in firms. The following are three practical implications of these trends for educational and vocational guidance services: (1) the need for extended information on educational and occupational opportunities across the European community; (2) the need for improved support services for those who move across national boundaries; and (3) the raising of expectations for guidance services in countries where they are currently ill developed. (Initiatives are described and six references are included in the document.) (CML)

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The Single European Market

and its Implications for Educational and Vocational Guidance Services

A Review by
J.A.G. Banks, A.J. Raban & A.G. Watts

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John Banks is a consultant at IFAPLAN in Brussels; Tony Raban is a Careers Adviser at the University of Cambridge Careers Service and Chairman of FEDORA; Tony Watts is the Director of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (jointly sponsored by CRAC and Hatfield Polytechnic).

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The Single European Market and its Implications for Educational and Vocational Guidance Services

introduction

31 December 1992 is the date set for the completion of the Single European Market. This was defined by the European Commission in the Single European Act 1986 as "an area without internal frontiers . . . in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured". In reality, 1992 will not herald a set of dramatic overnight changes. Many steps in the direction of the Single Market have already been made, and some will remain to be tackled after 1992. Nonetheless, the symbolism of "1992" has enabled the scale and significance of the changes taking place to penetrate public consciousness both inside and outside Europe.

The creation of the Single European Market has considerable implications for educational and vocational guidance services. In this paper we will attempt to explore some of these implications, and also to report on some of the initiatives taken so far to address them.

Historical background

roots

The vision of a united Europe can be traced back to the 18th century, and particularly to the Proposal for a Perpetual Peace, put forward in 1713 by the Abbe de Saint Pierre. Its re-emergence in the mid-20th century was a reaction to the militant nationalism which, it was argued, had brought about two World Wars and the decline of Europe's place in the world (Neave, 1984). Its initial aim was expressed in the preamble to the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty in 1951:

> "to substitute for age-old rivalries the merging of essential interests; to create, by establishing an economic Community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples long divided by bloody conflicts; and to lay the foundations for institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared."

formation of the Community

The European Economic Community was formed through the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Its initial signatories were Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. They were joined in 1973 by Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom; in 1981 by Greece; and in 1986 by Portugal and Spain. A number of West European countries –

including Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden – are not at present members; possibilities for extending the Community to cover relationships with such East European countries as Czechoslovakia and Hungary are beginning to be considered, though at present in a very preliminary way.

different conceptions

From the outset, there have been differences of view about the extent of the Community's goals, and in particular whether they are wholly *economic* or whether they imply wider *social* and *political* unification. The Treaty of Rome is essentially economic in nature, and the Single Market sustains this conception. Some Member-States, including notably the United Kingdom, have so far been very resistant to wider incursions into their national sovereignty: one effect of this is that efforts to initiate Community-level action in the field of education – which was excluded from the Treaty of Rome – are resisted because of the threat to sovereignty which they are seen to pose. At the same time, many Europeans continue to hold the aspiration to greater social and political unification. From a British perspective, the division of view on this matter has been given a strong political colouring by the fact that Britain has been ruled throughout the 1980s by a right-wing government under Margaret Thatcher, which has increasingly associated European aspirations with Eurosocialism. This was highlighted in the summer of 1988 when the EC President Jacques Delors (a French socialist) gave a well-publicised speech to the British Trades Union Congress on "the social dimension" of 1992.

difficulties

The advent of the concept of the Single Market has certainly given a strong fillip to the Community. Prior to that point, the gradual enlargement of its membership had arguably weakened, rather than strengthened, its coherence and influence. In particular, the admission of Denmark and the United Kingdom – two countries with advanced agricultural systems – had created new economic tensions; while the later admission of Greece, Portugal and Spain increased the difficulty of sharing out the agricultural support and regional development fund, as well as further complicating and slowing up the processes of negotiation and decision-taking. Meanwhile, the Common Agricultural Policy of guaranteed agricultural price support continued to run away with the Commission's budget, while embarrassing all concerned by the creation of surpluses of grain, butter, wine and oil which were expensive to store and impossible to sell except in ways that damaged Third World countries' agricultural economies.

breakthrough

1988 saw a major breakthrough on the political front: an agreement to reduce gradually the proportion of the budget spent on agriculture, which in turn enabled governments to agree on an increase in the size of the budget itself. At the same time, the Single European Act 1986 began to take effect by *inter alia* relaxing the voting procedures and making decision-taking somewhat quicker and easier. The Commission, strengthened politically by these developments and strongly led by Delors, formulated two key strategies: a timetable to "complete" the unification of the Common Market to stimulate trade and economic growth; and new priorities for the use of the main budgetary funds. The latter involved doubling help for the backward regions by 1992, and setting policy priorities in favour of creating new employment, progressively adapting the economics of the agricultural regions, helping young people find jobs, and tackling long-term unemployment. The Community's own legislative and policy role was redefined in terms of "complementarity" and "subsidiarity" – French conceptions (as is much of the language of Community policy, so weak has been the anglophone contribution) – whereby the Community's interventions would be linked to actions which either could not be undertaken at national level or where action at European level gave a definable "added value".

The combined effect of these clarifications, new priorities, and timetabling (particularly the "1992" deadline) almost comprised a relaunch of the Community. Although basic differences still persist between "interventionists" and "deregulators" around the Council table when the Ministers or Heads of State meet, the Community has become a reality to many people, especially in industry and commerce, for the first time. The prospect of freedom of movement of goods, persons, services and capital is seen as real – still not unrestricted, perhaps, but sufficiently so to cause most people in the public and private sectors to feel that they now need to take it seriously.

the single market

The programme of changes is vast. It ranges from the elimination of all controls on the movement of capital within the Community to the opening-up of previously protected markets such as financial services, transport and public procurement to EC-wide competition. Border controls will be removed to facilitate the flow of goods, and administrative controls will be ended. Numerous technical standards are also being harmonised in order to remove other potential barriers to trade. All this will mean European-wide production, marketing and distribution operations. Beyond this, it is hoped to move

towards a common currency and a common monetary system. The intention is that eventually the only significant obstacles to trade that will remain will be intangible barriers, such as those stemming from language, culture or tradition.

potential effects

Much of the motivation behind this is to produce a larger "domestic" market, making it possible for European companies to achieve sufficient economies of scale to compete more effectively with Japan and the USA in global markets. The Cecchini Report (1988) attempted to assess the economic advantages of the Single Market. The advantages for growth, productivity and employment should be considerable, if the barriers really do fall. In relation to employment, for example, the report estimated that the Single Market should lead in the medium term to the creation of 1.8 million new jobs across Europe, and that if supported by expansionist economic policies, it could lead to the creation of 5 million new jobs. Cecchini also recognised what a political and social challenge the 1992 objective represents. Restructuring will probably lead initially to a net loss of jobs, and this will probably be particularly acute in certain areas. Some commentators indeed have seen the Single Market in much more jaundiced terms, as producing "greater regional inequalities, an increased concentration of economic power in the hands of transnational interests, an acceleration of environmental degredation and the potential loss of democratic influence in the economy" (Robins, 1989). While not taking such a pessimistic view, Cecchini's study concluded that measures will have to be taken to address the social implications of the Single Market, as well as to ensure that new development and employment opportunities are exploited.

Possible effects on educational and occupational mobility

From the viewpoint of educational and vocational guidance services, the most important effect of the Single Market is its likely impact on educational and occupational mobility. Hitherto, much of the latter mobility has consisted of unskilled or semi-skilled workers moving from areas of high unemployment to areas of labour shortages. Increasingly, however, this is giving way to a more fluid movement of skilled workers and professional staff.

employer policies

A number of employers have already appreciated that they will in future need staff who can operate effectively in the widely differing business, cultural and linguistic environments which

obtain within the Community. Just as employers with several locations within a single country have always expected and assumed that staff could work in any of those locations, so many employers with locations throughout the Community will increasingly assume that staff can be mobile at this level as well. Furthermore, with barriers to business being removed, organisations are more and more planning their activities on a European scale without regard for national boundaries – a trend noticeable, for example, in the location of industrial production units, which no longer necessarily need to be placed within particular countries to serve their domestic market. In the same way, organisations are increasingly anxious to ensure that their human resources needs are planned at a European level. The traditional practice of allowing each local subsidiary or branch to recruit for its own needs may not result in that organisation having the right people in the right place with the right European-level experience. The result is efforts to co-ordinate recruitment policies and even recruitment activities, looking for good candidates wherever they can be found regardless of country of origin.

Moreover, the traditional policy of many multinational organisations on training people to be effective in different cultural or linguistic environments is changing. In the past, staff were recruited and given their initial training in their own country. International experience was "bolted on" at a later stage. But some organisations are now planning training which embraces international experience right from the start of a career – before staff become too set in their attitudes.

the role of educational mobility

The sort of people who are likely to fulfil these needs may themselves have been educated in more than one country so that they have both the cultural understanding and the linguistic skills which are necessary to operate widely within the Community. It is here that the impact of programmes like ERASMUS and COMETT (to be described later) is particularly important. Indeed, by creating people capable of operating in this way, the programmes accelerate the demand for them. Educational mobility clearly encourages subsequent occupational mobility.

extent

The numbers of students whose experiences of education and training cover more than one country is difficult to ascertain because of the varying ways in which such experiences can be achieved. Numbers of participants in formal European Community programmes like ERASMUS and COMETT are

available (see below). But the flow of students between Member-States at postgraduate level is not so effectively monitored, and the flow from education into employment across national frontiers is at present impossible to determine. Furthermore, less formal activities such as undertaking vacation work in another country – which is increasingly popular and very useful for people who want to be more mobile internationally at a later stage in their careers – are unrecorded at any European or national level. Nevertheless, despite the lack of precise figures, it is clear that more and more students are benefiting from some sort of transnational experience in education or initial training.

traditional patterns

It is also interesting to note the effect that growing EC unity is having within some of the Member-States. In many countries the labour market even for the highly skilled has been largely local or at best regional. This has been matched in most cases by an equally local system of higher education – the tradition of attending a local university or college. Most such people, having received their education in their home area, then look for a local job – a trend reinforced by the fact that in countries with long university courses the graduates are often old enough to have acquired their own family responsibilities, with the consequent impediments to mobility. The major exceptions to this pattern are France, Ireland and the UK. France and the UK both have traditions of studying away from home; while Ireland and the UK share comparatively short courses and a lack of military service. Ireland also has a very high proportion of young graduates for its size and a labour market which is too small to absorb them.

effects of EC policy

Most other Member-States may therefore be in the interesting position of moving directly from a series of local or regional markets to a European one without an intervening national stage. The effects of EC policy in this field are, however, hard to predict. Regional development policies may create more jobs in certain economically backward areas, thus allowing the highly qualified to remain in those areas. Cross-border regional co-operation may create new local though trans-national labour markets. Nevertheless, the fact that more and more activities – especially in the business field – are being planned and co-ordinated on a Community level is bound to have the effect of opening up the market for the highly qualified.

wider mobility

It is also interesting to speculate – though at present it must remain speculation – as to what effect these developments will have on mobility between the EC and the rest of the world. Will

the existence of a large, multinational bloc with ease of internal movement satisfy its inhabitants' desire for mobility, thus lessening the flow between, for example, Europe and the USA? Is there are danger of a "fortress Europe" mentality leading other countries to retaliate by making it harder for EC nationals to enter their labour markets? Will there be certain major links between the EC and other blocs – for example, with South America because of the common languages, or with the non-EC countries in Europe because of the common heritage and geographical proximity? There is, as yet, no real evidence on which to base an answer to these questions. On the premise that two of the determining factors (though not, of course, the only ones) in international mobility are educational mobility and skills shortages, it is likely that existing mobility between the EC and other countries will continue. The USA will surely continue to be an attractive country for education and training, and all developed countries outside the EC with skills shortages are likely to continue to look for highly qualified manpower wherever it may be found.

Surmounting the obstacles

structural restrictions

The principle of the European Community (even before the Single European Act) was always that no-one should be discriminated against when applying for a job because they were not a national of the country concerned, and that once offered a job, they had a right to reside in that country. New members of the Community tend to enter under transitional arrangements whereby this right to work does not immediately apply: Portugal and Spain will not acquire it until 1993. There are also some limitations on the policy. For example, a European Community national can be excluded by a Member-State on the grounds of public health or public order. Certain areas of employment can also be restricted to nationals of the country concerned if it would not be in the public interest to employ a non-national. This restriction has been widely used in the past in the public sector, but the Commission and the Courts of Justice are trying to limit its applicability to cases where there would be a genuine and proven risk to the state. Even public-sector employment therefore is becoming more open to nationals of other Member-States.

other obstacles

There remain, however, two major obstacles towards freedom of movement within the Community: non-recognition of qualifications from one Member-State to another, and inadequate mastery of foreign languages. The Commission has accordingly given a high priority to tackling these obstacles.

educational equivalence

Harmonisation of qualifications. Non-recognition of qualifications is a problem both within the educational system and in the labour market. With regard to the former, institutions of higher education have of course developed methods over the years for dealing with applications from particular groups of foreign students, though not necessarily from students within the European Community. For example, many institutions in the UK are much more familiar with students from other Anglo-Saxon systems of education – in Commonwealth countries or the United States – than they are with applications from continental Europe. In certain countries on the continent the main influx of foreign students in the past has been from developing countries. The establishment of the network of National Academic Recognition Centres (NARIC) is an important action by the European Commission to overcome this problem. It is now possible for both educational institutions and employers to ascertain at least the official equivalences of particular educational qualifications.

Without denigrating the importance of this effort, however, there is another aspect of the problem which is less easy to resolve. Even if two qualifications may be officially equivalent in level, they may be very different in content. Only familiarity with the actual product is likely to solve this difficulty. Obviously, as the flow of individuals across frontiers increases, so both academic institutions and employers will become more familiar with what people with certain qualifications have studied and are capable of performing.

professional barriers

The harmonisation of professional and vocational qualifications is equally important. Certain areas of activity may well be controlled by legislation – this is almost always the case with professions like medicine and the law and possibly also with those like engineering and architecture. In some cases, it may be impossible to operate in a particular country without a legally recognised professional qualification. In other cases, it may be that certain activities cannot be undertaken without such a qualification though other aspects of the profession could be. For example, the signing of plans by an architect or an engineer may require a legally recognised qualification though the actual drawing up of those plans might not. Finally, it may be that a professional title is controlled by law, but the activity of the profession can be carried out as long as the individual does not claim a status to which he or she is not entitled. This, however, is a rather narrow and legalistic definition of the problem and ignores the more general issue of familiarity and general

acceptance by employers of qualifications which they do not understand and with which they are not familiar.

legal ruling

The European Community has recently attempted to solve at least the legal problems of recognition of professional qualifications (where some progress had already been made, especially in the medical and related professions) by adopting a general directive under which any professional qualification requiring three or more years of high-level post-secondary education shall be acceptable throughout the Community. Most graduates, therefore, are likely to be covered by this ruling, the details of which have yet to be worked out in practice. In cases where important differences in education and training or professional structure arise, allowance is made for compensation mechanisms in the form of either an adaptation period (possibly supervised practice) or an aptitude test. Again, only experience will overcome the problem of familiarity, but at least any professionally qualified person will (with a very few restrictions) be able to practise their profession throughout the Community.

sectoral progress

Until this breakthrough, various sectoral directives had been agreed, to cover certain specific fields including doctors, nurses, dental practitioners, midwives, veterinary surgeons, pharmacists and architects. The Commission has now indicated its recognition of the importance of speeding up the work on the mutual recognition of other vocational qualifications, with a view to creating "occupational labour markets" at Community level. Proposals will be brought forward by the Commission to extend to other levels of qualification the general approach that has now been adopted at the professional level. This will, it is hoped, overtake the slow process of comparing vocational training qualifications between Member-States, which has been going on since 1985. The decision establishing this process required the Commission and Member-States to draw up for each profession, at the "qualified worker" level, a Community description of practical professional requirements, and for each Member-State, a table setting out the certificates, qualifications, diplomas and training specialisations used. The texts resulting were then published, with Member-States' "mutual agreement" on them. Specialist working groups, made up of experts from official bodies and the social-partner organisations, have completed work of this kind in six sectors: the hotel and catering industry, the motor vehicle engineering industry, the construction trades, agriculture, the electrical industry, and the textile industry. Completion of the processes for "mutual

agreement" is not so far advanced, and at the time of writing (early 1989) publication is imminent of the relevant texts for only the first three of these occupational areas.

linguistic needs

Language problems. Obviously any individual seeking to work in another Member-State has to convince their potential employer not only that they have acceptable academic and professional qualifications but that they can do the job better than other candidates. In many cases this means that they will need to have a sufficiently good knowledge of the local language. A lot of employers are now demanding that applicants for jobs, at least at graduate level, should have a knowledge of one or even two languages other than their own. French and English tend to be the two most widely specified languages because they are the two most commonly taught throughout the Community. Anyone who has these two languages is likely to find that they can communicate with almost anyone else at a professional and managerial level. German and Spanish are probably the next two most important languages. Three of these four should suffice for general mobility, but clearly particular jobs may need a knowledge of the local language of the area in which that job exists. The level of that knowledge will be related to the nature of the job itself: for example, to undertake guidance or counselling would require a very high level of language and of cultural knowledge, whereas to be a research scientist might require much lower levels.

language blocs

It is worth noting, too, the emergence of what might be called language blocs within the EC. Employers in countries whose language is spoken in another Member-State may first look there before going outside the language group. Many British employers have recruited Irish graduates on this principle; and there is evidence of Dutch employers recruiting more Flemish speakers from Belgium (Flemish being a Dutch dialect). The need for language skills has long been recognised in countries with minority languages like Denmark, Greece or the Netherlands. It has been less well recognised in countries like France and the United Kingdom whose languages are widely used across the Community, though even here the message is now beginning to get through.

LINGUA

To respond to the language problem, the Commission has adopted proposals for a new programme entitled LINGUA. They go far beyond the earlier set of proposals which were brought to a halt in 1982 by the refusal on the part of the Danish government to accept expenditure proposals which touched on

compulsory education (an area in which, as noted earlier, the Treaty of Rome does not provide the Commission with any legal competence). The present mood of commitment to making a reality, both economically and socially, of the Single Market has enabled the Commission to make some headway against narrow nationalistic thinking, though latitude has been permitted for some countries to take a narrower view of LINGUA than others. The programme puts forward substantial action proposals related to improving the qualifications and competence of modern language teachers, developing inter-university co-operation in modern language teaching, and supporting the development of modern language learning in firms. It also envisages financial support for educational exchanges, with the aim of establishing an educational visit abroad of at least two weeks as a regular part of the curriculum of all European pupils between the ages of 13 and 18.

COMETT and ERASMUS

Other programmes designed to promote mobility. LINGUA seems likely to become the third major education and training programme of the community. Two are already established: COMETT and ERASMUS. COMETT provided funds for the development of university-industry partnerships nationally and trans-nationally, and for a range of exchanges, joint projects and joint development work designed to promote the gradual Europeanisation of university-level technical training. The aim of ERASMUS is to ensure ultimately that all students in higher education are able to study for part of their course in another Member-State. The immediate objective is to shift the percentage who do so, probably around 2–3% at present, up to 10% by 1992. The scale of participation in both these programmes is already considerable. Under COMETT, nearly 2,500 higher-education students were provided with placements in firms abroad in 1988; even this supply only met about a quarter of the demand, and the budget for the second phase of COMETT will enable the numbers to double. ERASMUS has aroused even greater interest and demand.

The European Commission is also keen to capitalise on the resources of scientific and technical expertise within the Community, especially in the field of basic research. It has accordingly set up schemes designed to cover exchanges between laboratories in different countries. This provides scientists and engineers with opportunities to work in other Member-States at postgraduate level.

These developments at higher-education level raise the question

vocational training exchanges

of whether a similar scheme to ERASMUS should not be provided to Europeanise courses of vocational training by ensuring that all trainees spend part of their training in another Member-State. The Young Worker Exchange Programme has been in existence for some time, but it covers only small numbers and in general does not have a strong training component. The scale of other exchanges is, however, growing. In particular, the Commission's PETRA programme, designed to help raise the quality of initial vocational training for young people and help their entry into employment, will develop a range of trans-national partnership models for training. Exchanges of staff and trainees are likely to feature as a large component of such joint activity, and to generate more demand for employment, whether short- or long-term, in another Member-State.

Implications for educational and vocational guidance services

What are the practical implications of these trends for educational and vocational guidance services? At least three such implications can be identified. The first is the need for extended information on educational and occupational opportunities across the European Community. This need can be met in two main ways: through published information and databases; and through short-term work-experience schemes. The second implication is the need for improved support services for those who move across national boundaries. And the third is the raising of expectations for guidance services in countries where they are currently ill-developed. We will look at each of these in turn.

educational directories

Published information and databases. Any expansion of mobility for either education or work within the Community depends very heavily on the availability of information about the opportunities offered. A considerable amount of work has already been done in the educational field. The *Student Handbook* published by the European Commission is now in its fifth edition: available in all nine official Community languages, it describes the basic systems of higher education in each of the twelve Member-States, together with information about sources of more detailed information, financial support, etc. A companion volume, the *Directory of Higher Education Institutions in the European Community*, is about to appear in a second edition. This gives addresses of individual institutions but no detail about their courses or structure. That directory

and possibly future editions of the *Student Handbook* are likely to be available on floppy disc for database access as well as in hard-copy form. The Commission is also planning to publish in 1989 a guide to higher education qualifications in the Member-States, provisionally entitled *The Higher Education Diploma Directory*.

job-vacancy information

On the occupational side, there is as yet no joint database of employment opportunities within the European Community. The only organised links between placement services in the different Member-States are through SEDOC (Système Européen de Diffusion des Demandes d'Emploi Enregistrées en Compensation Internationale) which links the placement services of Ministries of Labour in the Member-States. It is not, however, proved a very efficient mechanism except in rather specific circumstances. A wider-ranging review of how vacancy information might be circulated between Member-States is now taking place, examining in particular ways of standardising vacancy information for ease of electronic transfer.

graduate vacancies

There are particular problems here regarding employment opportunities following higher education. Ministries of Labour have not, in most countries, traditionally been as important in the graduate labour market as they have at lower levels. On the other hand, no alternatives are yet evident. Only in Ireland and the UK and amongst the Grandes Ecoles in France are there well-developed institution-based placement services in higher education, and this makes links between the institutions themselves difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, the Liaison Committee of Rectors Conferences of Member-States of the European Communities is looking to see if there are ways of circulating graduate vacancies throughout the EC.

employment guides

Some attempt at providing information about the acceptability of professional qualifications has been made by the Commission with the publication of a new book called *A Guide to Working in a Europe without Frontiers*, but this only deals with those professions where transferability of qualifications is already accepted and not with those where harmonisation remains to be achieved. At a practical level, the Commission is about to publish Tony Raban's book on *Working in the European Communities* (Raban, 1988) in four of the official languages. This is a guide for both graduate job-seekers and graduate recruiters to the systems of graduate recruitment in the twelve Member-States, with background information about the structure of educational and professional qualifications. Apart

from these resources, job-seekers and employers are thrown back on nationally published information, which is as yet totally unstandardised between the Member-States. It is interesting to note, however, that a group of leading quality newspapers in several of the Member-States have now formed a network for publishing recruitment advertisements in any or all of the papers covered, according to the wishes of the advertiser.

a Commission task

More generally, it is worth noting that the introduction of a new system for compiling and disseminating information on working conditions and job opportunities in the various Member-States was specifically mentioned in the Commission's working paper on "The Social Dimension of the Internal Market" (SEC (88) 1148), as one of the measures to give impetus to mobility. The paper also stated that the costs of information to workers who wished to work in another Member-State ought to be substantially reduced, and that the provision of this type of information was a Community task which must be tackled.

Work-experience schemes. Information on opportunities abroad can be achieved not only through published information and databases but also through short-term work-experience schemes. Guidance services are accordingly coming under growing pressure to arrange and provide information on such opportunities.

higher-education work experience

Some of the programmes we have already examined may provide opportunities of these kinds. In addition, many higher-education students have long looked for opportunities to get work experience abroad – especially those like engineers who need such experience as part of their courses or those like business-studies students for whom it is a great advantage. In some structured exchange programmes, periods of work experience abroad are now built in, but organisations like AIESEC or IAESTE have long been active in this field and not just within the European Community. Experience of working abroad has another important benefit. As was pointed out earlier, the problems of recognition of qualifications spring partly from legal problems of recognition but much more from lack of familiarity. Employers who can see vacation students from other countries actually at work without having to take the risk of recruiting them to permanent jobs may be more inclined to recruit them when they graduate, because they are better able to judge the actual skills and abilities from different educational systems.

school work experience

At school level, too, there have already been some examples of students on work-experience schemes obtaining placements in other Member-States than their own. Such schemes are often linked with language teaching, but can have a valuable spin-off in terms of vocational orientation. Twinning arrangements between towns can provide a useful focus for schemes of these kinds.

support for mobile students

Support services. It is already clear from the experience of the ERASMUS programme and its precursors that a major programme of student mobility within the Community requires not only information but considerable support for the students involved. This support has to be provided both before they leave (preparation) and after they arrive (integration). Obviously anyone who is going to spend a period of study in another country needs not only linguistic training but also a good understanding of the cultural and educational system into which they are going if they are not to flounder and have difficulties in adjusting. This is both personally distressing and also wasteful for students on short exchanges, who need to maximise the benefit of the experience. Methods of study, for example, can be very different from one country to another. There are also the practical problems of accommodation: students can waste much time looking for rooms, negotiating with local landlords, etc., at a time when they are also trying to start a new course.

It is therefore important that the student guidance services in the institutions sending students abroad and in those which receive them are aware of and geared to these needs. Guidance services have to work closely with the academics who organise these exchange programmes. It may also be that other social services outside the academic institutions may need to be informed – most obviously, medical services.

support for mobile workers

People who go abroad to work will also need support. Employers will need to devote more attention to this than they have in the past. In addition, other agencies and support mechanisms – both formal and informal – are likely to evolve, including counselling services. In principle, the support needs of mobile workers within Europe are no different from those of migrant workers moving to or from other parts of the world. Within the context of the Single Market, however, there may be more motivation – and more resources – to address them.

Raising of expectations of guidance services. Student guidance services – educational, vocational and personal – are going to

new guidance demands

have more demands put on them both by their own students seeking information about what they may expect when they go abroad and by incoming students. Even in countries with well-developed student guidance services, this will cause difficulties. Most services are provided by individual institutions of higher education for their own current (and possibly also former) students. They may not technically be open to students from other institutions in their own country, let alone from abroad. Only in the UK through the AGCAS "Mutual Aid" system is there a well-developed procedure for graduates using the services of institutions other than their own. Yet students are beginning to look for help to guidance services in the country where they wish to study or work. Careers services in the UK, for example, are already experiencing a flow of letters and callers from the continent seeking help in finding out about courses, vacation training or jobs.

different guidance structures

Another problem arises from the differences between services in different countries. In some cases student advisers are mainly concerned with academic study problems, in others with publicity and advice to school pupils considering applying for entry, in yet other cases with administrative problems. They may or may not deal with careers guidance, placement, personal problems, etc. The lack of standardisation may mean that, even where services exist, it may be hard for individuals to identify the appropriate source of help in an unfamiliar environment.

"underdeveloped" services

This is clearly even more of a problem in countries where such advisory services are comparatively undeveloped. In the Mediterranean countries, in particular, there has been a much less strong tradition of providing student guidance services. Students typically rely more on support from family and friends – even for job hunting – than on formal guidance services. Nevertheless, this is beginning to change: the increasing complexity of the educational systems and labour markets and therefore of the choices to be made is leading to demands for better advice and information. Accordingly, the relatively "underdeveloped" countries are increasingly looking to their more advanced neighbours in the Community for help – something which the availability of Community funding for study visits has positively encouraged.

economic pressures

The position is complicated by economic pressures within a number of the Member-States. In some cases, student guidance work is seen as contributing to the effective operation of the system of education. Providing students with better information

makes for better choices: providing them with better support may improve completion rates, and providing proper placement services may reduce unemployment – especially in vulnerable disciplines like the arts and social or life sciences. On the other hand, student services can be seen as less important than the provision of the education itself: at times of reduced public expenditure they can be vulnerable to cuts, or it may be hard to make a case for their creation where they do not exist. The situation is still very much dependent on individual governments in the Member-States, though the Community is encouraging the development of good practice through the provision of comparative information.

Initiatives to date

In response to the kinds of problems and opportunities outlined above, a number of initiatives have already been taken at European level in relation to development of guidance services. We will look in particular at three. The first is European-level reports on the state of guidance services. The second concerns the place of guidance in Community action programmes on the transition from education to adult and working life. The third is the setting-up of FEDORA, a European association for people involved in student guidance.

regular report series

Reports on guidance services. Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome provided that it should "lay down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy". In 1963, the Council of Ministers accordingly established Guidelines for a Vocational Training Policy, the third principle of which included the statement that "special importance shall be attached . . . to a permanent system of information and guidance on vocational advice, for young people and adults, based on the knowledge of individual capabilities". The Commission subsequently announced its intention to publish regular reports on "the function of vocational guidance, its progress and experience gained".

trends

A series of such reports has since been published, the most recent of which (Watts, Dartois and Plant, 1988) concentrated on the 14–25 age-group and paid particular attention to two issues: the changing role of professional guidance services, and the linkages between different guidance services. The report identified some of the key differences between the services in the twelve Member-States. It also, however, noted three common trends. The first is that educational and vocational guidance is increasingly being seen as a *continuous process*, which should

start early in schools, should continue through the now often extended period of transition to adult and working life, and should then be accessible throughout adult and working life. The second is the move towards a *more open professional model*, in which the concept of an expert guidance specialist working with individual clients in a psychological vacuum is replaced, or at least supplemented, by a more diffuse approach in which a more varied range of interventions is used, and more attention is given to working with and through networks of other individuals and agencies. The third is the move towards a greater emphasis on the *individual as an active agent*, rather than a passive recipient, within the guidance process.

recommendations

The report also included a number of recommendations for further Community action in the guidance field. One of the major areas of development noted was the growing interest in Member-States in the use of computer-aided careers guidance systems. A Second European Conference on Computers in Careers Guidance is accordingly being held in Cambridge in June 1989, following up an earlier conference held in Brussels in November 1985. The advent of the Single European Market gives added significance to such systems. In the long term, they hold out the possibility of developing harmonised databases which would enable individuals to have immediate on-line access to information on opportunities in all parts of the Community.

transition programmes

Action programmes. The development of guidance was a major theme in the European Community Action Programme on the Transition of Young People from Education to Adult and Working Life, which ran in two stages from 1978 to 1987. The Commission's report on this aspect of the 30 pilot projects which took part in the second stage of the Programme (1983–87) was published under the title *Guidance and the School* (IFAPLAN, 1987). Its recommendations correspond closely to those of the report by Watts, Dartois and Plant (1988): they referred to the need to strengthen the guidance function of the secondary school, to integrate guidance more effectively into the curriculum, and to link the role of the school more clearly with that of other services offering guidance, especially to those who leave school at 16. These recommendations were all endorsed by the Ministers of Education, when they received the Commission's final report on the Programme, and have been incorporated into many of the projects in the new PETRA programme.

limited progress

Nonetheless, it is probably true to say that little advance has been seen in either the qualitative or quantitative strengthening

of the guidance services in most of the Member-States, though those which start with the least (i.e. the Mediterranean countries) are beginning to set up the basic structures needed to provide a service of some kind. It is an interesting reflection that neither the IFAPLAN nor the Watts *et al.* reports on guidance included recommendations about the need to set up trans-national arrangements or structures to assist mobility between Member-States. It seems hard to believe that, had the reports been written in 1989 instead of 1986/87, they would not have included at least some significant references to this aspect. Such has been the acceleration of interest in mobility for young people as a result of the move towards 1992.

aims of FEDORA

FEDORA. A significant initiative at grass-roots level has been the setting-up in 1988 of an association which seeks to link together people involved in the field of student guidance in higher education, called FEDORA (Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique). Its aims are five-fold:

(a) to exchange information and experiences at European level among those concerned with the guidance of students at university level;

(b) to improve the quality and effectiveness of university guidance in each of the Member countries of the European Community through joint action and research programmes;

(c) to collaborate with other bodies so as to convey to them the views of professionals in the field of academic guidance, and to provide them with the means to consult these experts on specific activities or specific matters relating to academic guidance;

(d) to provide a network to support European Community programmes (such as COMETT and ERASMUS) and to make these programmes known to universities and institutions of higher education as well as to current and prospective students; and

(e) to promote and carry out studies and research on academic guidance, publish and disseminate the results, and organise seminars, conferences and congresses on these subjects.

projects

FEDORA has a number of projects in hand but two in particular are important in the context of the problems discussed in this article. One is the preparation of a directory of student guidance services in institutions of higher education within the Community, which will enable advisers and their clients to contact their opposite numbers for help and advice. The directory will give details of the various services found in each

institution – what sort of clients and problems they cater for, what languages are spoken by the staff, etc. The second project is the development of a glossary of terms used in student guidance, set in the context of information about the educational background and structures of each Member-State. This will enable advisers to interpret more accurately information on guidance in the different systems, since such terms can have different meanings in different contexts.

other associations

FEDORA is one of a number of European associations which are developing at higher-education level – there is one for engineering education (SEFI) and another for university press and publicity officers (EUPRIO). There is also discussion of an association for those involved in organising international exchange schemes in the Community. Clearly the EC both creates a need for such associations and a framework for them to operate in – hence the active encouragement of the European Commission for their development.

Conclusion

In this article we have attempted to examine how the Single European Market has evolved, what its effects are likely to be, and what its implications are for the role of guidance services. It is clear that if the opportunities offered by the Single Market are to be realised, the educational and vocational choices of young (and older) people in Europe will increasingly need to be taken within a European context. To support this, guidance services will have to develop new resources and to establish stronger networks with guidance services in other Member-States. In the light of the very different traditions and organisational structures in which they have originated, this will not be easy. A key issue – for guidance services as for the Single Market as a whole – is whether this diversity will impede or enrich the achievement of the new European aspirations.

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Useful Addresses

COMETT/ERASMUS/ LINGUA	Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels, Belgium.
FEDORA	A.J. Raban (Chairman), Cambridge University Careers Service, Stuart House, Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1XE, UK
IFAPLAN	Square Ambiorix 32B, 1040 Brussels, Belgium
NICEC	Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB3 0AX, UK

CRAC
Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB3 0AX
Telephone: (0223) 460277
Fax: (0223) 311708